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Special Issue, August 2024

pp 265-291

**Local and Regional Migration Governance in Nigeria:
Perspectives from Youth, Growth, and Development**

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31920/2516-5305/2024/sin2a11>

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Abstract

Studies have examined the nature and causes of international migration among Nigerians as well as the political economy of migration and the governance of

regions in Nigeria. However, adequate attention has not been paid to investigating the implications of youths' migration from local or regional areas in Nigeria. It adopted an inferential survey research and secondary data that were obtained from textbooks, academic journals, official documents of federal ministries, departments, and agencies and the internet to gather information, opinions, and perspectives on the subject matter. It further provides an in-depth analysis of the existing migration framework at local and regional levels in Nigeria. This study found that factors driving global migration are becoming more and more entrenched, and they don't appear to be abating. In order to properly understand the transnational contextual realities of Nigerians within the framework of migrant existences, innovative techniques, as previously discussed, should be appreciated and implemented. Additionally, drivers of migration should be completely acknowledged and addressed through policies and programmes. The study concluded that the government should address factors driving the youth into migration in order to tap into or benefit from their youthful contributions to Nigeria's growth and development.

Keywords: *Local Migration, Regional Migration, International Migration, Youth, Growth, Development, Nigeria*

Introduction

Migration has been a part of human activity since the beginning of creation. Migration cannot be inevitable given the history of people, families, villages, and nation-states. Migration, therefore, is as old as mankind itself, especially in those ancient times when it was necessary for people to move throughout various famine seasons in order to look for food. Two more factors that drove migration in those days were the desire for independence and to stand out from the throng. This has had a big impact on world history as well as African history (Akanji, 2012). Although the features of migrant populations vary widely, migration is a common feature of social and economic life in many countries (Organisation for Economic Co-operative & Development, 2014). Globalisation, which has taken numerous forms and demonstrated tremendous potential and benefits all across the world, is making Nigerians more mobile. These benefits include chances for employment, credentials from foreign schools, connectedness, and cross-border exchanges across countries, all which all create avenues for interdependence, especially in the labour market (Fayomi, 2013; Adesote

& Osunkoya, 2018). Thus, shifts in people's desires account for a significant amount of the variance in migration rates. Undoubtedly, one of the primary reasons individuals migrate is the potential for a better life.

Migratory movements within a state in the southwestern part of Nigeria are expected to increase in the coming years due to a variety of demographic, economic, and political factors (Adepoju 2016). Migration governance will therefore become decisive in efforts to manage these large movements of people within this region.

It's interesting to note that Sub-Saharan Africa's (SSA) biggest source of net migration is still Nigeria. Nigeria accounted for more than 17% of the net migration in the region in 2017, according to the WDI (International Labour Organisation, 2019). People relocate from their typical locations of residence for a variety of reasons (push and pull pressures). The country's high unemployment rate, migrant remittances, population expansion, unstable politics, ethno-religious conflicts, and poverty are the key reasons behind the widespread migration of men and women within and outside of Nigeria (Adepoju, 2016; Young, 2013; Shiyanbade et al., 2024). Due to dire economic circumstances and extreme poverty, especially among children and young adults, people are also compelled to move in search of better living conditions (Adepoju, 2016). The differences in development and availability of economic resources between Nigeria's rural and urban areas stimulate migration both within and between countries (Ghebru, Mulubrhan, George, & Adebayo, 2018).

As migration raises the possibility of moving within a profession, it often not only gives the migrant greater power but is also acknowledged for its relationship to labour force mobility on both a geographical and occupational level (Ghebru et al., 2018). For instance, 10,387 doctors with Nigerian training were practicing in the UK as of the end of 2022 (Afolabi, 2022). Physicians are not the only highly qualified workers that are relocating abroad; but there are also highly skilled professionals and artisans. Although studies have investigated factors or drivers provoking youth migration, research evidence is very limited on the implication of youth migration for Nigeria's socio-economic growth and development. Agunyai, Ojakorotu, and Bamidele (2022) have argued that Nigeria would continually be denied the economic benefits that her youth would have contributed if the incessant outflows of the youth were not controlled or checked.

In light of this, this study brings new perspectives and unique methodological insights to the subject of Nigerian migration motivations. It offers a distinctive perspective on a range of issues that together influence Nigerians' decision to migrate abroad in the twenty-first century and beyond. In order to have an ongoing and useful understanding of Nigerians as they travel across definitive national and regional borders around the world, given Nigerians' significant global and international migratory footprints, it is crucial to keep comprehending them within migration areas in order to effectively comprehend and control migration.

Theoretical Framework

The push-pull theory is adopted in this paper. Its adoption is based on the fact that it better captures the subject matter of factors influencing the movement of Nigerians from their local and regional areas to other places within and outside the country and migration governance. The push-pull model is associated with the works of scholars such as Udo, (1993), Afolayan (1998), and Awaritefe, (2000). It was selected based on the fact that it aptly explained reasons why people migrate from one place to another. Importantly, some of these reasons are components of governance. Good governance that tends to provide basic adequate service delivery, responsive government, performance, accountability, and transparency would go a long way towards addressing pushing factors that forcefully make people migrate from their country to another (Agunyai et.al., 2022; Agunyai, 2018). Since the research is about the governance of local and regional migration, the push-pull theory adequately explained how good and bad governance could pull or push people into migration.

The core tenet of the push-pull model states that people migrate to other locations in search of better opportunities due to push factors or repulsive forces like unemployment, poverty, a lack of basic socioeconomic infrastructure, and a general lack of economic opportunity. Several scholars, most notably Udo (1975) and Afolayan (1972), claimed that an evaluation of external variables determines the decision to relocate. When people choose to leave rural areas, a trajectory or pattern of movement is established from places with "push" endogenous factors (poverty, lack of socioeconomic opportunities, unemployment, etc.) to destinations with attractive exogenous factors

(pull) of employment opportunities, accessibility and availability of socio-economic facilities, and a better life overall (Castles, 2012).

Push factors exist at the point of origin and act to trigger emigration; these include the lack of economic opportunities, religious or political persecution, hazardous environmental conditions, and so on. Pull factors exist at the destination and include the availability of jobs, religious or political freedom, and the perception of a relatively benign environment. Pushes and pulls are complementary; that is, migration can only occur if the reason to emigrate (the push) is remedied by the corresponding pull at an attainable destination. In the context of labour migration, push factors are often characterised by the lack of job opportunities in sending areas or countries, and pull factors are the economic opportunities presented in receiving areas or countries.

Thus, migration can be associated with urbanisation, development, or the forced movement of people fleeing violent wars or natural disasters in their home countries. In the context of economic migration, economic difficulties like unemployment, low salaries, or low per capita income relative to the country of destination are occasionally seen as pull factors. Pull variables would be immigration-related laws and the status of the labour market in recipient countries. Fear of a civil war, widespread violence, or state repression are some of the possible causes of involuntary displacement.

Conceptual Review

Local and regional migration

Nigeria has had significant local and regional migration in the pre-colonial, colonial, post-colonial, and contemporary periods. In spite of this, the country continues to lack current and reliable migration statistics. It is also necessary to look at the planning and policy engagement in the origin and destination areas of local and regional migration in the states and geopolitical zones of Nigeria, as well as how it is evolving and how it is classified. Local or regional migration is defined as the movement of individuals over a certain area and period and has been among humans since the beginning of humanity.

Humans have been on the move, seeking to "overcome the earth," so to speak, and to make the most of the resources and socioeconomic opportunities currently at their disposal for their own well-being.

Furthermore, environmental shocks such as earthquakes, desertification, flooding, and other natural disasters have forced people to abandon their usual locations of residence. People may also be pushed or forced to relocate from their place of origin to their destination via social upheaval and armed combat (Shiyanbade & Esan-Atanda, 2024).

Some of the current factors contributing to local and regional conflict in Nigeria include border disputes, Islamist violence, farmer-herder clashes, and armed banditry. As long as there is conflict and violence, there will be an increase in the number of Nigerians who are displaced. The deadly attacks of the Islamist group Boko Haram started to extend beyond Nigeria's northeastern border in 2014, drawing Cameroon, Chad, and Niger into the disastrous regional conflict. The war never stops, adding to the problem of Nigerian refugees. Approximately 2.4 million people have been displaced by Boko Haram from their homes in the Lake Chad Basin region (UNHCR, 2022b).

Youth

The youth are the future of any nation, constituting a sizable section of the populace. Certain scholars contend that youth is a social condition of mind that is independent of age, but others have challenged this notion and emphasised that youth truly refers to the younger generation. The United Nations Organisation (UNO) defines youth as those between the ages of 15 and 24. This age group also includes young people who are classified as youth according to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The term "youth" includes adolescents and other young people. It's a period of maturation and adulthood (World Bank, 2021). An individual may reach a crisis point in their life if they have not acquired and been indoctrinated with enough social capital during the socialisation process (Otite & Ogionwo, 1979; Shiyanbade, Akinwale, & Odunlade, 2023).

In Nigeria, the National Youth Policy (NYP) Document (NYP 2019) argues that a youth is someone between the ages of 15 and 29. On the other hand, a person is considered an adult and has the right to vote when they turn 18 (NYP, 2001; 2009). These are people who, in most cases, have completed their secondary education and are either employed to earn a living salary or enrolled in postsecondary education programmes. Alternatively, these people could join a technical or vocational programme to acquire skills that they could use on the illicit

market (Shiyanbade, Akinwale, & Odunlade, 2023). A significant portion of the population in the nation is usually made up of young people; they are also the future's parents, workers, and leaders, and it is expected of them to lead the nation to new heights.

Therefore, the nation's policies regarding the welfare of the youth population could have an effect on both their individual lives and the society they would eventually establish and maintain. A person's ability to carry out effective leadership duties will depend on the kind of upbringing and direction they received from different socialisation agencies, such as families, communities, and governments that are dedicated to their development. Basically, it's critical to keep in mind that nations in general

Growth and development

The concept of growth in any nation state is a major breakthrough in the economy of the state and, most importantly, the comfortable living conditions of its citizens. People expect progress when an administration changes since it is the duty of every government in a nation-state to encourage economic growth. Industrialised countries' economic growth strategies show that 95% of the opinions of their citizens are reflected in the policies of their governments. For a nation-state to be taken seriously by the international community, it must experience fast economic growth and development. This development pertains to each branch of government's efficiency (Okeoghene, 2017; Shiyanbade & Esan-Atanda, 2024).

The suitable advancement and improvement of the state's economy is referred to as "development". A reasonable level of production of products and services by the workforce (whether employed by public or private entities) is a prerequisite for economic growth. To accomplish the compound goal of socioeconomic progress, an effective nation-state must have a sufficient number of capable individuals in the required sectors. The capacity for critical and creative thought is highly prized, and when someone lacks it, their nation's socioeconomic development either stagnates or advances slowly. Uju and Joy (2014) quoted in Okeoghene (2017) stressed that the economic development of a nation state determines its security and well-being.

Development is simply the transformation of a country from its primitive state to a more desired or preferred state. This study connects it

to the growth of nation-states. Human civilisation perceives progress as fundamentally connected to the amount and quality of output produced in a nation-state, as well as its technological standing, cultural advancements, and the psychological courses pursued by its population (Fayomi, 2013; Shiyabade & Esan-Atanda, 2024). According to Okeoghene (2017), productivity and development go hand in hand; both contribute favourably and grow at a sustainable rate. The process of a nation state's development can be used to evaluate its status and progress. In the international system, a state's highly esteemed reputation is dependent on its degree of development. Every nation and state has a place and a degree in the global system. They're based on the level and progression of the nation-state's development. Research has indicated that development is not a static condition but rather a dynamic one. A country's development can be gauged by the quality of life enjoyed by its citizens (Okeoghene, 2017; Shiyabade et al., 2024). Access to a broad range of options and choices in terms of housing, healthcare, and other sectors pertinent to the political, economic, social, and environmental realms of the state is another indication that a nation-state has grown.

An additional indicator of growth in that particular nation-state is the increased productivity attained by an effective labour force (Oladiran, 2014; Shiyabade & Esan-Atanda, 2024). As a result, development explains both the reasonable prices and living standards of the people in that community. A nation-state's expansion affects changes in a number of state domains, including the labour market, public infrastructure, and educational system, among others. All of the previously identified trends may eventually be recognised as elements that logically promote migration within a state. Drawing from the previously mentioned evaluation of Nigeria, scholarly works demonstrate that despite the country's abundant resources, poor resource management and low productivity have hindered its ability to realise its full potential. As a result, Nigeria's socioeconomic status is problematic, with a number of issues connected to the driving force.

Migration

Migration is a complex social phenomenon that depends on a number of factors, including the economic standing of a country, the character of the political environment at the moment, and the ideology of the state (Agim, 2015). This may help to explain the UN Report's conclusion that

the majority of migrants to Europe and other developed parts of the world originated in less developed countries. Ikwuyatum (2016) went on to explain that consideration must be given to the length of the move in order for migration to occur. The author identified that migration should be understood as the movement of people over a certain geographic area and through a specific period of time. Specifically, he highlighted the act of moving individuals from their current or typical place of residence to a new location and having them live there for a minimum of one year.

They estimate that there are 281 million international migrants worldwide, or persons who reside in a country other than their natal country. Nearly three out of every four foreign migrants were between the ages of 20 and 64, with 41 million of them being under the age of 20 (United Nations, 2020). It is vital to note that the majority of migrants are Africans who were forced to leave their home countries by acts of terrorism, natural disasters, conflicts, and, most significantly, poor governance and inept leadership (Olaitan, 2001).

The act of moving people, either temporarily or permanently, from one geographic region to another is another definition of migration (Agim, 2015). International borders may not be the only places where this mobility happens; it can also happen from rural to urban, urban to rural, and rural to urban (Oyeleye, 2013). A transfer in the regular place of residence from the origin or departure point to the destination or arrival point is typically associated with migration, which is a form of spatial or geographical mobility between two geographical units (Oyeleye, 2013). Fajana (2000) proposed similar definitions of migration, characterising it as the movement of individuals, groups of individuals, or ethnic groups between two discrete sites, A and B. Tension between the two points, which increases to the point where it becomes actual movement, might be used to describe this movement.

According to these scholarly definitions, migration is the regular movement of individuals between communities or nations and is a crucial component of global population dynamics. While the motivation(s) behind migration vary depending on the situation and the person, social, political, and/or economic aspects are usually taken into consideration.

Internal/Local/Domestic Migration

Internal migration is often referred to as local or domestic migration. Internal migration is important almost everywhere, and in certain countries, it is significantly more important than external or international migration. According to projections made in 2001, there were over 120 million Chinese citizens who moved within the nation, whereas only 458,000 left to pursue work opportunities abroad (Ping, 2003; Agim, 2015). In the five years before the 1999 census, fewer than 300,000 Vietnamese individuals departed for other countries, whereas nearly 4.3 million relocated within Vietnam (Anh et al., 2003). In India, millions of individuals migrate within the country, while only a small percentage travel abroad (Srivastava & Sasikumar, 2003). Migration occurs both within and across regions of a country, with the majority of migration coming from rural and economically poor areas to big cities. Internal migration is the term used to describe a change in residency within a country, such as between states, provinces, cities, or municipalities. An internal migrant is a person who moves to a new administrative territory. Local or internal migration can be classified into three groups: urban to urban, rural to urban, and rural to rural migration. They argue that these migrations can still be classified as in-migration even if they occur within a single country. These can be further seen as present in Table 1 below.

Migration trends in Nigeria

Zones (states within the zones)	Dominant Migration Trends
South-South (Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Rivers, Delta, and Edo)	• Human trafficking and human smuggling • Irregular migration routes to Europe • High number of returnees from Europe • DP site with significant number of IDPs sponsored by German missionary group, but not recognised by the State government as an IDP camp • Hub for refugees and asylum seekers related to the Cameroon-Nigeria Bakassi region
South-East (Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo)	• Human trafficking • Irregular migration • Active diaspora

South-West (Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, and Oyo)	• Irregular migration • Immigration (immigrants from around the ECOWAS sub-region) • Transit and take-off point for trafficking and smuggling via air • Destination point for a high number of returnees • Destination for child labour migrants from the Bene republic • Hub for refugees and asylum seekers
North-West (Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, Zamfara)	• Identity issues (families and tribes that do not accept being Nigerian) leading to cross-border migration to neighbouring countries • Child trafficking to similar tribes in neighbouring countries • Irregular migration - Kano is a major route for irregular migration to North Africa • Regular migration to the Middle East
North-East (Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, Yobe)	• Cross-border migration to the Sahel regions • IDP situation because of Boko Haram • Nigerian refugee returnees
North-Central (Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau, Federal Capital Territory)	• Nomads (herders) • IDPs because of farmer-herder conflicts

Source: Adopted from Kwaku Arhin-Sam (2019, Arnold Bergstraesser, Institute for Cultural Studies Research)

Note: This mapping is non-exhaustive because migration trends keep changing for states.

External/Regional/International Migration

For individuals and their kids, migration—domestic or international—is a major source of material growth. Crossing national borders by individuals, especially from less developed to more developed countries, has a big impact on a lot of different fronts (IMF, 2020). First, it immediately helps the migrants by allowing them to boost their productivity and earn more money in the country where they are going. This is primarily due to the fact that immigrants are distinct from native people as well as within their own group. Thirdly, it can have an immense effect on the countries of origin. However, through trade, foreign direct investment, and technological transfers, migration also creates remittances and fortifies international relations. Through the processes of immigration and emigration, commonly known as

migration, people are travelling around the world. When people cross state borders and stay in the receiving state for a set period of time, it occurs (OECD, 2012). It also refers to moving from one's usual place of residence across an international border or within a state, irrespective of one's legal status, the voluntariness or involuntary nature of the movement, the causes of the movement, or the length of the stay (IOM, 2019).

History and Current Trends of Migration in Nigeria

Nigeria, like other West African countries, is very dynamic and complex due to its diverse, fluid migration process, trend, and pattern. However, important historical eras, such as the pre- and colonial centuries, will draw attention to Nigeria's history of migration, while the post-colonial era will draw attention to modern trends.

A. Precolonial Migration in Nigeria: Nigeria's labour migration history stems from the four slave trade eras that lasted from 1400 to 1900. During the 15th century, nearly 12 million slaves were trafficked from west, west-central, and eastern African countries—including Nigeria—to European colonies in the Americas (Mberu, 2010). Approximately two million forced labour migrants were lost to Nigeria during this time of slavery. During this time, both male and female migration linked to trade took place between Nigeria and the Gold Coast (Ghana). In fact, migrants have always seen West Africa as a single economic region where individuals could easily move across and exchange products and services.

B. Colonial Migration in Nigeria: The entry of the British in the middle of the 19th century allowed for widespread intraregional labour mobility. They brought in economic and political policies focused on exports, which profoundly changed the character of migration, especially intraregional labour movements in Nigeria. New resource-rich areas were opened up in Nigeria's north (groundnuts and tin) and south (cocoa, kola nuts, rubber, and coal) to fund the colonial programme. To sustain the development of these resources, people had to migrate from rural to rural areas in search of work as migrant traders, farm labourers, miners, or migrant renters. Furthermore, migrant labourers from neighbouring West African countries such as Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad, Mali, Guinea, Cape Verde, and Togo were lured to the labour market (Udo, 1975).

When cash crops expanded, more people moved inside the region to work on export products, such as the cocoa belts in southwest Nigeria and the palm oil in Nigeria's east. Furthermore, a substantial influx of migrant workers from both domestic and foreign sources occurred once petroleum was discovered in Nigeria's Niger-Delta region in 1956. 25. Migrant labourers from all over the nation—especially from rural areas—moved into regional administrative and market centres in a variety of locations, including Lagos, Kano, Zaria, Enugu, Ibadan, Sokoto, and Kaduna, in search of trade and gainful employment, according to research on internal labour migration (Ikwuyatum, 2006). Abba (1993), for example, pointed out that between 1914 and 1922, there was a noticeable inflow of foreigners into Kano and its environs. It is estimated that during this period, between 10,000 and 30,000 Tuaregs from the Niger Republic moved to Kano, Nigeria.

C. Migration Trends in Nigeria's Post-Colonial Era: In the late 1960s and early 1970s, as poverty and socioeconomic conditions worsened, many people made plans to migrate. Macroeconomic adjustment strategies and a substantial increase in the number of people entering the labour force have made the employment situation worse and created ongoing pressure for migration (both emigration and immigration). The absence of distance has been more noticeable in the modern era, when information and communication technology dominates intraregional labour migration. The internet provides instant access to information about work opportunities and one's location; hence, the various forms of globalisation infrastructure significantly encourage intraregional labour migration.

Although there have been substantial changes in the migratory movements into and out of Nigeria throughout time and space, it would be more accurate to describe the migration flows as complex. Human migration across national lines in the past has mostly been north-south and, to a lesser extent, west-east due to trade, warfare, droughts, and pilgrimages (Mortimore, 2001). For example, Mortimore (2001) argued that migration across Nigeria's borders from the north to the south started during the colonial era. Nigeria's internal migration issue was examined in a 2010 survey conducted by the National Population Commission (NPC). The survey revealed that the age distribution of both return and new migrants is youthful, with most migrants in Nigeria falling between the ages of 10 and 34. Migration and return migration

peak between the ages of 25 and 29, which is in compliance with NISER (1993). Immigrants with no formal education placed highest (27%), followed by those with only a primary education (21.3%), and those with a postgraduate degree (0.6%) at the bottom, according to the NPC (2010) report. This information tends to corroborate Udo's (1975) finding that a higher percentage of young people who enter the migratory stream are those with low educational attainment, such as those without a formal education or those who dropped out of primary school.

Other contemporary phenomena include violence, armed banditry, farmer-herder conflicts, intercommunal disputes, border disputes, and the ongoing strikes in the health and education sectors. As long as there is conflict and violence, there will be an increase in the number of Nigerians who are displaced. The deadly attacks of the Islamist group Boko Haram started to extend beyond Nigeria's northeastern border in 2014, drawing Cameroon, Chad, and Niger into the disastrous regional conflict. The war never stops, adding to the problem of Nigerian refugees. Approximately 2.4 million people have been displaced by Boko Haram from their homes in the Lake Chad Basin region (UNCHR, 2022b).

Drivers of Local, Regional, and International Migration among Nigerians

Using the assumptions of the push-pull theory, it is clear that Nigerians migrate from one destination to another as a result of certain ugly or attractive circumstances. From the perspective of this theory, drivers of local, regional, and international migration seem to be within the assumptions of the push-pull model. Locally, many Nigerian youths have migrated from their remote villages mainly in search of greener pastures (jobs, economic opportunities, insecurity, climate change problems, among others) in most big cities. The case of youths moving from Boko Haram or banditry conflict-affected areas (Yobe, Maiduguri) of Nigeria to more safer places, where they can continue their education, search for jobs, and other economic opportunities, adequately explained the drivers of local or domestic migration (Agunyai et al., 2022).

The drivers of regional migration also look similar to those that of local migration in that the whole essence of migration is covered by the push-pull theory. Regional migration, which can be intraregional migration or interregional migration, is driven by both pushing and

pulling factors. Intraregional migration, which is the movement of people within the same region of a nation, and the movement from one region to the other, which is interregional migration, are all driven by negative and attractive conditions either from their region or other regions. For example, many Nigerians have changed locations within the same region or to other regions for reasons related to push-pull factors. Nigerians, especially businessmen and traders who once lived in Northern Nigeria, have relocated to safer places within the same region or other regions to continue with their businesses. The case of some Igbo and Yoruba businessmen, women, traders, and students relocating for their safety against pushing factors like Boko-Haram and banditry attacks and harsh climatic conditions, among others, adequately explained drivers of regional migration.

The IOM defines a driver of migration as a complex web of interconnected factors that influence an individual, family, or demographic group's decisions concerning movement, including displacement. The concept of "drivers of migration" is fluid; it encompasses the interaction of situational, social, structural, environmental, and local factors as well as incentives and constraints at the local, national, regional, and global levels. They operate along a continuum between voluntary and involuntary mobility (IOM, 2019).

For international migration, unfavourable foreign exchange rates partly contribute to youth migration from Nigeria abroad. This is the outcome of Nigeria's currency, the Naira, freely depreciating against the three main world currencies—the US dollar, the pound sterling, and the euro. Many people migrate overseas and leave the country as a result of the acute weakness of the Naira. No matter how stressed out they are or what kind of work they do abroad, young Nigerians believe that if they earn foreign exchange, it will be a substantial sum of money when they come home. Many people in Nigeria are still opting to relocate abroad in order to earn highly competitive currencies that they can subsequently remit home in huge quantities, owing to the country's negative foreign exchange status. With very little foreign exchange, people may achieve a lot of beneficial things in Nigeria after they are sent as remittances.

Young individuals are turning to activities like cryptocurrency trading, forex trading, employing foreign labour, etc. in order to make money in dollars, as one dollar (\$1) is currently worth more than fifteen hundred naira (#15500). Not to mention, Nigeria is rife with corruption, which has an impact on both the macro and local levels of the country.

This has led to the widespread recognition in Nigeria that there are actually more people waiting to pillage the country than there are people plundering it at the moment, and that those people—including children and young adults—are more dangerous and desperate than those who are actually plundering the country. Every institution in Nigeria is rife with corruption. This suggests that in the short and distant future, corruption and impunity will be unrestricted. It follows that migration around the world will keep increasing in this situation. The primary driver of migration from Nigeria is corruption, which is a fundamental sign of structural and institutional collapse, inadequate governance, and other problems.

The forces that shape international migration are getting more established and don't seem to be abating. In actuality, most Nigerian migrants use the money and properties they sell to finance their international journeys. The bulk of Nigerian migrants spend tens of thousands of dollars travelling abroad because they only see safe options abroad and only misery at home in Nigeria. Individuals who are incapable of travelling on a regular and legal basis go in irregular and unlawful ways, putting their lives in danger when traversing the Mediterranean Sea and the deserts. They also become victims of unscrupulous migrant smuggling companies that result in fatalities, destruction, and modern slavery (Akanle, 2022). This demonstrates how determined they are to move somewhere else. Nonetheless, there are other approaches to addressing the issues of both internal and international migration, including effective migration governance.

Implications of Local, Regional, and International Migration of Youths for Growth and Development in Nigeria

The implications of local, regional, and international migration for Nigeria's growth and development are both positive and negative (Agunyai et al., 2022). From the perspective of remittance inflows, evidence shows that families and households in Nigeria's local or regional communities have benefited from migrants' remittances. For example, members of families (parents, siblings, cousins, and others) have benefited from their migrant relatives either in cities, regions, or overseas through remittances sent home. Medical bills, house rent, feeding, and school fees have been paid through remittances sent from big cities, regions, and abroad by migrant relatives. This has implications

for the socio-economic growth of households in Nigeria, especially in terms of disposable income, welfare packages, and upkeep of aged parents (Agunyai & Ojakorotu, 2022).

Evidence abounds to validate the fact that migration is capable of enhancing the socio-economic development of sending countries (that is, countries with huge cases of emigration) through remittance inflows. Nigeria, as country, can hardly survive without remittances from her citizens in diaspora. On several occasions, the Nigerian government has received remittances from Nigerians overseas and used them to improve socio-economic conditions in the country (Agunyai et al., 2022; Akanle, 2023a; Jaiyeola, 2023).

Conscious understanding of international migration is essential given Nigeria's progress and the existential concerns it faces. It is certainly impossible to understand Nigeria in its current state without accounting for international migration in the lived equation and experiences of Nigeria and Nigerians in transnational networks. Nigerian migration patterns are deeply ingrained in the identities of many countries, as a substantial number of Nigerians leave their homeland to escape the harsh living conditions there. Because of their broad and growing worldwide mobility, Nigerians are regarded as some of the world's most migratory people (Akanle, 2023a). Data from Nigeria's National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) corroborates the country's high rate of emigration. It demonstrates how the population of Nigerians living abroad grew rapidly by 563.57 percent in just one year, from 55,181 in February 2022 to 366,164 in February 2023 (Jaiyeola, 2023; Shiyanbade & Esan-Atanda, 2024). There is a substantial and expanding Nigerian diaspora as a result of continuous migration, and this is not expected to alter very soon. Consequently, further research is needed to fully understand its components, ramifications, and trajectories in academic research and practice.

Nigeria's political and economic challenges are the primary cause of the country's growing youth emigration. Many Nigerian households currently depend on remittances from Nigerian migrants residing abroad for food, healthcare, education, beginning costs for businesses, and other essentials of life (Jaiyeola, 2023; Akanle, 2023b). Since they have overtaken FDIs and GDPs and grown to be significant sources of foreign exchange, remittances from Nigerian migrants abroad have emerged as critical lifelines. At the national level, the GDP is continuing to contract, foreign exchange earnings from crude oil are diminishing,

and foreign direct investments (FDIs) are collapsing (Akanle, 2023a).

International migration is only one of the numerous ways Nigerian youth are finding it harder and harder to perform their duties for a living at all levels and on a variety of frontlines. It is plausible to argue that the benefits of direct and indirect foreign migration—economic, social, and psychological—are increasingly crucial to Nigeria's survival. This is the primary reason behind the widespread, violent, and desperate international migration that many Nigerians engage in as a coping strategy and survival measure to guarantee their survival. One important signal in this regard is the growing amount of remittances that Nigerian migrants residing abroad are sending home.

Most young Nigerians who relocate abroad do so in an effort to increase their prospects for success in life (Akanle, 2022). The majority of Nigerians walk outside for this very simple, fundamental reason. The desire to increase one's prospects in life, or the pursuit of a better life, is the primary driving force behind Nigerians' travel abroad; however, there are other considerations that may also come into play. As a result, a significant portion of Nigerians emigrate to affluent, developed countries like Australia, the United States of America (USA), Canada, Europe, and so on (Akanle, 2022; Jaiyeola, 2023; Shiyanbade et al., 2024). Even if migration from the South is still popular, Nigerians are travelling overseas more regularly and northward due to the many pull factors in such nations and locations. Typically, foreign Nigerian migrants see migration as a lifetime route to freedom.

According to Omobowale et al. (2019) and Akanle (2022), international migration is a crucial tool for Nigerians seeking to escape the poverty and underdevelopment of their own country. Because of this, there's a common belief that most Nigerian migrants migrate for economic reasons in the end, notwithstanding their claimed motives for doing so.

Migration governance as a mitigation strategy for redressing youth migration in Nigeria

Migration governance refers to all of the policies, guidelines, and practices that facilitate regular, secure, and orderly migration (IOM, 2019). Moreover, even though there are a lot of laws controlling migration, there is still a lack of national implementation as well as support for local capacity building that comes from international

partnerships. Migration into and out of Africa is expected to increase in the next few years due to a number of demographic, economic, and political factors (Adepoju, 2016). Migrant governance will therefore play a critical role in managing these enormous migrant flows. Africans currently make up little more than 1.2 billion people, but according to a medium-scenario population change projection, they would account for one-fourth of the world's population by 2050 (JRC, 2017). Population growth and the mismatch on the continent between countries with strong labour demand and those with large untapped labour pools underscore the need to seize opportunities for regional labour movement (Akanle, 2022). African migration occurs mostly inside the continent these days, especially among the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) (Adepoju 2016).

Even though migration policy is currently mostly within the purview of sovereign nations, migration governance has emerged on an international and (trans-) regional level in response to tackling this transboundary issue (Kunz et al., 2011). Recent developments, such as the adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants in 2016 and the impending Global Compacts on Refugees and Migration, are leading to the development of an international governance framework on migration. Thus, managing migration becomes a shared responsibility between institutional authorities (vertical governance) and a variety of individuals (horizontal governance). The Abuja Treaty, which established the African Economic Community, is the source of the African Union's migration frameworks (Achiume & Landau, 2015). The Treaty's Article 43 reads as follows: "Member states agree to adopt, individually, at bilateral or regional levels, the necessary measures in order to achieve progressively the free movement of 16 persons and to ensure the enjoyment of the right of residence and the right of establishment by their nationals within the Community" (OAU, 1991, 40). They provide member states with guidelines on how to manage migrant admission and treatment (Achiume & Landau, 2015; Inegbedion, 2022). These policy documents allude to the following regional and international migration-related statutes, notwithstanding the fact that they are not legally enforceable:

The African Common view on Migration and Development outlines the consensus view of the

The Nigeria Migration Policy (NMP) is the primary immigration policy in Nigeria, with the objective of "effective administration and

management of migration for the socioeconomic development of Nigeria" (FGN, 2015b: 1). It is a meta-document that provides the framework for the creation of sector-specific policies such as labour migration and diaspora policies. The NPLM aims to protect Nigerian migrant labourers, improve their health, and improve the health of their families who stay behind. Additionally, it aims to minimise any negative consequences for development while maximising the benefits of labour migration (FGN, 2015b: 6). The primary responsibilities of the ILMD are to establish and manage the NPLM, regulate the activities of private employment agencies both domestically and internationally, and protect the employment and social rights of Nigerian migrant labourers. It also oversees the National Electronic Labour Exchange (NELEX) Project 3, which acts as a central online location for companies and job seekers in both local and international markets, and the Migrants Resource Centres, which were established to provide services such as verification of pre-departure briefings, counselling, and low-skilled worker and technician certifications to Nigerian nationals wishing to flee the country.

Concluding Remark

Nigeria must make a choice. A complex Migration Governance Framework and a range of migration-related laws, when fully put into place, have the potential to alter the way migration is managed in order to better protect those who are forcefully displaced and maximise the benefits of migration. However, the issue of migration has little political clout in Nigeria, save from the government's continuous ability to profit from the considerable amount of remittances received from the Nigerian diaspora. Due to the complexity and multiplicity of issues in Nigeria, a limited group of actors are advocating for greater involvement in migration governance. The status quo is broadly accepted, and no significant political or social groupings are displaying noticeably different views from the governments when it comes to issues pertaining to the diaspora, more lenient visa regulations, or expanded normal migration channels. Unquestionably, Nigerians are departing their nation in large numbers. This pervasive normativity of migration has been sociocultural contextualised as the Japa Phenomenon, which refers to the desire to escape danger as quickly as possible. The term "The Exodus" aptly describes the scope of Nigeria's global migration in the contemporary era. Indeed, migration from Nigeria is definitive, pervasive, existential,

and firmly crystallising, and it will surely persist in the long run. This is definitely especially true now that more and more Nigerians are realising how important it is for them to migrate from local to regional or even abroad. Migration therefore becomes a means of escaping, adjusting, and coping with Nigeria's continued underdevelopment. The factors driving global migration are growing more and more entrenched, and they do not appear to be abating. The drivers of migration should be completely acknowledged and addressed through policies and programmes.

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